

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC GENERAL SCHOOLS¹

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Abstract

In response to increasing concerns with the legitimacy and efficiency of public spending, performance management as a part of world-wide public sector reform, called New Public Management (NPM) has taken place. This is also the case of educational sector. In Estonian education system, legislation formally enables to design an integrated performance management system. But there is few research done to investigate how these policies and regulations ought to be put into force in order to gain the benefits considering the schools' and pupils' better performance.

This study investigates how different stakeholders are involved into the performance management in Estonian general schools. The study is based on empirical survey data gathered from 303 schools providing secondary education in Estonia.

The research findings have three main implications. Firstly, the paper contributes to the scarce knowledge about implementation of performance management issues in public schools. Our analysis revealed that compilation of school development plans in Estonian schools is rather a formal obligation. Therefore we propose that the analysis and discussion of the school development plans is needed to organize on regional level, involving all main stakeholders of a school. Secondly, we suggest that in the circumstances of a decentralised education system, like in Estonia, it is needed to implement, central practical performance assessment principles and guidance for the schools. Thirdly, it is highly necessary to improve schools' cooperation with different stakeholder groups. Also the framework involving different stakeholder groups in the decentralized schools management system should be built up.

Keywords: performance management, balanced performance measures, secondary schools, public education, Estonia

JEL Classification: I20

1. Introduction

During the last decades an almost world-wide public sector reform, called New Public Management (NPM) has taken place. NPM will encourage the public sector to adapt private sector management techniques (Hood, 1995) as well as develop assessing performance measurement in order to monitor the degree of efficiency and effectiveness with which the public services are delivered. Most of the OECD

¹ This research was conducted as a part of a research project financed by the European Social Fund.

countries are using performance assessment of public programs and services (Carr-Saunders, 2005). This is also the case of educational sector. In Estonian education system, legislation formally enables to design an integrated performance management system. There are several essential evidences in the literature revealing a significant positive effect of management accounting systems information on organisations' performance. Despite the importance of performance management, several authors have argued, that a majority of research examines a very limited part of overall school performance management (PM) process, concentrating mainly on academic performance. There seems to be a lack of depth of coverage of particular performance elements and of interconnections between them. This study investigates how different stakeholders are involved into the performance management process in Estonian general schools

The study is based on empirical survey data gathered from 303 schools providing secondary education in Estonia and concentrates on practical issues of school development plans and stakeholders involvement into the performance management processes.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The second section provides a theoretical framework for analyses, drawing on the balanced performance management approach and stakeholders involvement aspects in performance management issues. The third section is devoted to a discussion of the methodological issues concerning the empirical study. Subsequently legal regulatory environment influencing the operations of Estonian schools will be described and analysed. In the fifth section we discuss the main strategic development plan and stakeholders involvement issues in public schools, considering also corresponding educational and performance management policy aspects. To conclude the paper, a number of key issues of the study are presented.

2. Theoretical background of the study

Since the early 1980s, public sector has been under constant pressure to improve its performance in pursuit of more efficiency and effectiveness, and to revive the shrinking trust in public institutions. According to Osborne and Gaebler (1992) the bureaucratic government should turn into an entrepreneurial government, both competitive and customer-driven. This paradigm shift was accompanied by the rise of techniques used by market-oriented managers to lead the organization and control the use of resources. According to Lapsley (2008) there is also a pressure for accountants with entrepreneurial attributes and motivations to be deployed in the public sector. The NPM with its "economic rationalism" and "managerialism" became an international trend (Bogt, 2001).

Mussari (2001) has pointed out, that emphasis on decentralized managerial and financial control in the public sector, as well as the fostering of "performance culture" or "performance orientation" has resulted in a growing use of performance management tools. Performance management is the process by which an organization integrates its performance with its corporate and functional strategies and objectives

(Bititci *et al.*, 1997). Lapsley (2008) emphasises performance measurement as a key feature of NPM. Performance measurement is essential part of organisations' management helping to reflect the desired objectives and the actual outcome. Fryer *et al.* (2009) emphasise performance measurement, relying on explicit standards and measures of performance, and increased accountability and parsimony in resource use. The idea, that a desired outcome serve as a goal or objective and progress is measured towards reaching this goal or objective, is a "corner stone" for the Management by Objectives (MBO) model.

In order to evaluate the performance, it must be clearly defined. The education systems', and also the schools' performance is defined by many researches (see Stewart and Umesh 2002, Lan and Lanthie, 2003, OECD 2008, PISA 2009, TIMSS 2009) mainly concentrating on academic aspects of performance, mainly on - the performance of pupils' learning and their knowledge. School performance, its measurement and management has been investigated by a certain number of researchers (see Bosker and Scheerens 2000; Ascher and Fruchter 2001; Karatzias, Power and Swanson 2001; Woods and Levačić 2002; Dolton and Newson 2003; Anderson, MacDonald and Sinnemann 2003; Irs and Ploom 2009; Irs, Türk and Vadi 2009). School performance measurement and management issues have been pointed out as important contingencies of the educational system quality and efficiency. According to Levacic (2008) the school efficiency measurement is a complex matter. She argues that using simple indicators of efficiency, such as costs per student (pupil), can be very misleading. Therefore, in public services, e.g. in education, both, the efficiency (usage of resources) and the effectiveness measures (like pupil performance) are important performance measures. Horvath *et al.* (2006) argue that advanced PM practices consider a broad range of measures and include, for example, financial indicators as well as indicators with regard to customer satisfaction and human resources. The combination of financial and non- financial operational measures provides the favourable insight into the organisations' performance management and enables to reflect the expectations and requirements of different stakeholders inherent to the public organisations. According to Webb and Vulliamy (1998), performance monitoring and evaluation evidence are more important in a decentralised than in a centralised system. Therefore, the school performance measurement and management serve as important issues to improve the quality and efficiency of contemporary education system. Different stakeholders are seeking to motivate the autonomous local education providers to act in pupils' and parents' interests and for better usage of capacity, Consequently, the schools accountability to local community and other stakeholders is increased.

Proceeding from the MBO approach, Deming (2000) argues that PDCA (Plan, Do, Check and Act) cycle as management cycle can be used for continuous improvement and learning in public organizations. The PDCA cycle proposes to plan, measure and analyze business processes in continuous feedback loop and to form a cycle. Also OECD (2005) definition of performance management as management cycle reflects the PDCA cycle idea – objectives and targets are determined, managers have flexibility to achieve them, actual performance is measured and reported, and this information feeds into decisions about program funding, design and operations. Berry

and Wechsler (1995) describe strategic planning as a systematic process for managing the organization and its future direction in relation to its environment and the demands of external stakeholders.

Motivated from the MBO approach, also the education systems' management has been restructured – much more authority is given to schools and local governments. For example, The Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (2007) suggests, that school headmasters should be given extensive authority, which leads to better school performance. There are also several researches supporting the Wößmann *et al.* (2007) conclusion that the decentralisation of decision making in education policy, as well as in other public services, leads to better performance and satisfaction with public services. The survey carried out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2008) among 29 OECD member states and candidate countries (including Estonia), shows that Estonian general schools have relatively high authority of decision concerning the matters of school curricular, human resource management, development planning and budgeting.

According to Fryer et al (2009, p. 480) successful PM systems are characterized also by following features:

1) alignment of the PM system and the existing systems and strategies of the organisation; 2) leadership commitment; 3) stakeholder involvement and 4) continuous monitoring, feedback, dissemination and learning from results. The first and last features are contributed by PDCA cycle management and the rest of them by collaboration with stakeholders.

As it has been already argued, motivated from the NPM principles, there is a tendency to decentralise the education systems and to give a high authority to the schools. With the aim of encouraging autonomous providers of local education to act in the best interest of pupils and parents, competition between schools becomes stronger due to pupil-based funding (Dempster, *et al.* 2001). Therefore, to survive, every autonomous school should work with a quality-improving management system and acknowledge the interests of stakeholders. An empirical analysis conducted by Wößmann *et al.* (2007), based on the results of PISA 2003, suggests that different facets of the accountability and autonomy of schools and the pupils' right to choose between schools are strongly associated with pupil achievement. Thus, with the extensive authority, the responsibility, or the accountability to society and to central government has been heightened. All in favour of a better quality of education system. Based on OECD (2008) survey, we can conclude, that this is also a case of Estonian general education system.

In order to operate up to stakeholders' expectations, schools should take advantage from collaboration with them. In decentralised school systems, the stakeholders' involvement in school management is often organised via elected school board, consisting of the parents, teachers and other schools' stakeholders, which school principals may, and have to rely on. The latter is also a case of Estonian general education system. According to the Act on Estonian Basic school and Upper Secondary School the school board of trustees have to consist the representatives of

teachers, parents, the local government, pupils, graduates, and of other organisations supporting the school. Leithwood *et al.* (2004) point out, that the school principals cannot fulfil the whole leadership role alone. In decentralised education system, the term site-based management has gained more importance. Leithwood *et al.* (2004) emphasise the importance of “distributed leadership in districts and schools”, which counts on the “shared, collaborative, democratic and participative leadership”. They explain that this is rather the case of cooperation of people from different management levels, than the case of peoples’ personal characteristics. According to the site-based management context, the parent leaders often make a substantial contribution to the schools’ performance. (Parker and Leithwood, 2000)

But Beck and Murphy (1998) claim that site-based management contributes to school’s performance only if there is accountability supporting the teaching and learning processes. Resnick and Glennan (2002) discuss the contribution of mutual or two-way accountability among school leaders and other stakeholders in different roles and levels of an organisation. For instance, school principals and teachers are accountable to the education authorities on local or central governments’ level for schools’ performance, but the governing bodies are accountable to school and the society as well, for providing the sufficient financing and other facilities needed.

The most important elements of an accountability of schools’ system’s are internal and external evaluation of schools’. An external evaluation of the school is performed by the evaluator or the group of evaluators who are not the members of certain school. (Nevo 2001) An internal evaluation (self-evaluation) can be defined as a continuous and systematic analysis of learning process, likewise school management and performance evaluation for strategic decisions making concerning pupils’ and school development management. Swaffield and MacBeath (2005) determine school self-evaluation as something that schools do to themselves, by themselves and for themselves. Hence, evaluation is important also from the perspective of PDCA and MBO, but also important means to provide to stakeholders information about the performance of a school.

The external and self(internal)-evaluation of schools’ activities is not so widely implemented in schools The survey (OECD 2008) showed that school self- and external evaluation system are employed only in half of the surveyed countries (in 14 countries out of 29). In Estonia both of them, the external and internal evaluation are applied and also legally required.

Towler and Broadfoot (1992) argue that the evaluation also can promote the knowledge, what is expected by the administrators. Accordingly, the self-evaluation may help to overcome problems, caused by the sense making of policies. The sense-making process is defined by organisational scholars, i.e. Karl Weick (1979) as the process by which individuals interpret the experience or information – this clarifies also the possible misinterpretations of the objectives within different parties. There are several factors affecting the sense-making process in the schools: in addition to the individual and group cognitive capacities, also the availability of collective learning opportunities in the school (Marks, Louis and Printy, 2000), the local school system’s

culture, leadership, collegial support, available resources and time to carry out the proposed initiative, as well the nature of the policy (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004). It is emphasised by Leithwood *et al.* (2004) that the most crucial role is played by the school, district and central governments' administrators, who decide about how the policy interpretation and implementation will be accomplished inside schools. Therefore, in order to successfully change practice inside the schools, the policymakers must assure, that the goals of the new policy are clear for the implementers.

On the other side, the decentralisation of education system puts high expectations on schools by the policymakers. The schools must be ready to meet responsibilities for development planning, resource allocation, usage of capacity, personnel and motivation management, performance measurement and performance management, and communication with parents and other stakeholders etc. There are several empirical evidence clarifying, how outcomes expected by policies' did not occur due to the reasons described above. Furthermore, Leithwood and Menezies (1998), based on eighty-three empirical studies on school-based management conclude, that the positive effects of school-based management to teaching and learning outcomes occur only when the both, pressure and support from state and regional level are provided to the schools. Leithwood *et al.* (2004) stress, that there is few research done to investigate how the educational policies and regulations are implemented at school level and how they ought to be put into force in order to gain the benefits considering the schools' and pupils' better performance. This paper contributes in a scarce knowledge about performance management policy implementation and gives some suggestions for education policy implication on school performance management aspects.

3. Research method and sample description

The purpose of our paper is to investigate, how the different issues of performance management regulations influence different cooperation aspects with stakeholders in Estonian general education system and to provide better knowledge to policymakers on the aspects of performance management policies (regulations) in order to gain expected benefits and achieve objectives.

The study relies on both primary and secondary sources. Therefore, the authors studied documents such as government publications, legal acts and regulations related to the issues discussed, as well as the strategic documents of schools and the statistic data available through the Estonian Education Information System (EEIS). EEIS is an individual-based database consisting of the relevant data of Estonian schools – data on all teachers, pupils, school curricula and the schools' physical environment.

A substantial part of the empirical data in this paper, in addition to EEIS and the schools' expenditure data, were collected by a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was splitted into five main sections concerning the implementation of the following areas of school management (e.g. performance management issues):

1. strategic management;

2. resource management and collaboration with stakeholders;
3. personnel management;
4. learning processes and quality management; and
5. school performance evaluation.

The questionnaire consisted of 103 questions; several of them had many underlying statements and criteria to measure. There were a total of 176 statements in the questionnaire. The answers to the questions were given on a five-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree; 2 – rather do not agree; 3 – difficult to evaluate; 4 – rather agree; 5 – strongly agree). There was also the possibility to answer 0, which stood for having no information or capacity to answer.

The target groups of the questionnaire were all Estonian general education schools providing secondary and/or upper secondary education. The survey was addressed to all of the most important stakeholders of the school: headmasters, teachers, pupils, their parents and the members of the board of trustees. The board of trustees consists of the representatives of teachers, parents, the local government, pupils, graduates, and of other organisations supporting the school. Regarding the teachers, pupils and parents, the target groups were limited to pupils and teachers studying or teaching in 9th or 12th grade and to the parents of these pupils. Before the main study, the questionnaire was tested among some headmasters and teachers. After testing, the pilot study was implemented in 11 randomly selected schools (in total 11 headmasters, 51 teachers, 121 pupils, 49 parents and 10 members of the school board filled in the questionnaire). Based on the analysis of the results obtained from the pilot study, the questionnaire was improved. The improvement consisted of reformulating some statements and improving the structure of the questionnaire.

The main study was executed from November 2009 to January 2010. The questionnaire was sent out electronically and in a written form. As all the schools in Estonia have access to the Internet, most of the respondents had the opportunity to fill out the questionnaire online. For this research paper, an electronic solution called the eFormular was used. This is a unique tool providing the possibility to create electronic forms (eFormulars) and conduct surveys via the Internet. The request to participate in a survey was sent to all general education schools in Estonia. To the schools that wished to respond by letter, the questionnaires were sent by regular mail in envelopes which could be returned without an additional fee (prepaid by the research team). The research group, including both authors of this article, wished to attract as many schools as possible. By the end of December 2009, about half of the schools had participated in the survey. The research group was not satisfied with the response rate, and thus, during two weeks all schools that had not responded were telephoned. As a result, most of the schools agreed to participate, apart from schools that had special reason not to do so (e.g. taking part in another survey or having other time-consuming duties). As a result, the questionnaire was filled in by 303 headmasters, 2,165 teachers, 5,482 pupils, 1,922 parents and 546 members of the school board.

4. Legal regulatory environment

The main set of legal acts, having impact on the regulation of PM issues in public schools are following:

- Estonian Basic School and Upper Secondary School Act (adopted in 2008)
- Local Government Organization Act (adopted in 2010);
- Local Government Financial Management Act (adopted in 2010)
- Decree of the Estonian Government on the Types of Strategic Development Plans and System to their Compilation, Implementation, Evaluation and Reporting (adopted in 2005);

According to the Local Government Organization Act, Local Government Financial Management Act and to the Decree on the Types of Strategic Development Plans and System to their Compilation, Implementation, Evaluation and Reporting the local governments and state agencies, also the schools, are obliged to prepare a strategic development plan for at least a three-year period for the municipality and agencies, which will serve as a base document for annual planning and budgeting later on. These acts and other legal regulations neither prescribe any structure nor give methodical advice on composing the strategic development plans. Local Government Organization Act states that the development plans must include analyses of current economic, social and environmental situation and present directions and preferences of long-term planning in the municipality. The Decree also requires to compile a report on the succeeded objectives and effectiveness of actions concerning the implementation of strategic development plan. Section 13 of the Decree even states, that abovementioned report is a basis to update the strategic development plan. Consequently, these acts are following the PDCA cycle approach. But the abovementioned legal regulation does not give any methodical advice on planning, budgeting and reporting issues.

Proceeding from the decree mentioned above, the Estonian Basic School and Upper Secondary School Act stipulates some principles for the strategic planning of schools. In order to ensure the consistent development of a school, the school shall prepare a development plan in co-operation with the board of trustees (council) and teachers' council. Therefore, the strategic planning can be seen as a systematic process for organization management based on the cooperation of different stakeholders. Based on the act, a school development plan shall set out the main objectives and areas of development of the school, an activity plan for three years and the procedure for renewal of the development plan.

Since 1997 the Estonian educational sector has implemented the external evaluation of pupils' achievement. Since 2006 the self-evaluation of education institutions has been legitimated. At the same time the role of the external evaluation of education institutions was reduced. Today, an external evaluation consists of the evaluation of study results and it is conducted by means of national examinations and final examinations and national standardised tests. According to the law, (Estonian Basic School and... 2010) the self-evaluation of schools is an on-going process, designed to

ensure the schools consistent development and supporting the development of pupils. The results of self-evaluation give an input for elaboration of school development and action plans. School headmasters have an important role to play in school evaluation, because they introduce the order for the self-evaluation process. During self-evaluation teaching and learning process, school management and their performance shall be evaluated. Schools are obligated to conduct a self-evaluation report at least once in every three school years and to submit it to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. The report is approved by the school's headmaster and coordinated by the school's board which consists of the representatives of parents, local government, pupils and teachers. But the self-evaluation, like described above, is still quite a new regulation in the Estonian Basic School and Upper Secondary School Act. Before 2006 there was only a duty of a school to conduct self-evaluation formulated. No any details in the law nor in other regulations/manuals were provided centrally on what the self-evaluation should consist of and how it should be conducted.

Since 2006, there have made several specifications concerning self-evaluation in the law, as well several manuals and professional instruction provided to schools centrally. The self-evaluation of a school must be based on educational institution's performance indicators, which are elaborated by the Ministry of Education and Research and are available to everyone through the EEIS. The self-evaluation should include also the aspects of leadership and management, including strategic management, of cooperation with stakeholders and of resource (financial) management.

Therefore in Estonian legal regulations, there is legitimated a performance management and measurement system of autonomously operating general education schools, including strategic and financial management, and collaboration with stakeholders issues.

There is a recent research presented by Leithwood, *et al.* (2004) where they stress, that there is few research done to investigate how the policies and regulations are implemented at school level and how they ought to be put into force in order to gain the benefits considering the schools' and pupils' better performance. Leithwood *et al.* (2004) emphasised, that the most crucial role is played by the school, district and central governments' administrators, who decide about how the policy interpretation and implementation will be accomplished inside the schools. Therefore, in order to successfully change practice inside the schools, the policymakers must assure, that the goals of the new policy are clear for the implementers. During the interviews with public sector officials we analysed the impact of legal framework on the development of performance management systems. One staff member described the situation as following:

The main driving force for the development or implementation is a legal act. If the issue is required by legal act, then it serves for further implementation. If not, we are not mainly taking our own initiative. We are basing on public sector legal acts and regulations in our activities.

This view is supported by Pallot (2001, p. 657), who pointed out that central legislation may play an important role in driving change in public sector. From the other side, the statement of the interviewee refers to the bureaucratic framework and attitude. Consequently, although there is formally legal framework for Estonian public schools, which enables to design an integrated performance management system, the legal acts and regulations promote the performance management and accounting change in an inharmonious way.

5. The main findings, discussion and political implications

5.1. Implementation of development plans

As it was mentioned above, according to the law, the schools in Estonia are presumed to compose a development plan. About 90% of all the school principals who completed the questionnaire, replied, that there have been the main performance indicators in the schools development plan presented and during the last year, they have summarised the fulfilment of development plan. This is not surprising, because, this is their duty according to law. From the other side, there is about 10% of principals, having no clear position about these aspects.

Similarly, about 90% of principals report that they have made corrections in the development plan during the last year; when planning the development of school, they count upon the developments and changes in the society and the changes in the school base on the analysis, conducted about the previous activities. Again, near 10% of the principals have no clear attitude concerning the development plan. A little different is the pattern of the answers to the question, whether there have been made corrections in the development plan during the last year – 9% of principals do not have clear opinion about this question and 7% answered negatively – therefore, it can be said, that in total, about 16% of principals rather have not made any corrections in their school's development plan.

Teachers answered to these questions quite positively as well, but 14% of the members of the school council do not have a clear knowledge about these issues. This is a little confusing, because, according to the law, the development plans should be elaborated in cooperation with school council. Our analysis revealed that 18% of council members do not have clear opinion about, whether there have been made any corrections in schools development plan. It can be argued that, they rather have not participated in the process of elaborating the development plan.

According to the law the schools should deal with planning and budgeting and with the management of their resources. Thus, there must be a tight linkage between development plan and schools' expenditures. 84% of principals report, that in the school's development plan, there have been planned long term investments. 5% of principals do not agree with this statement and 11% have no clear position. To summarize, there is about 30% of principals believing that earning returns on investments is not that schools should deal with. In reality, there are several opportunities for schools to earn some additional revenues and utilising also the schools' facilities effectively. For example, some schools in Estonia rent out the

school's field house or swimming pool in weekends or in the evenings to local people for organising different events. From other side, about 20% of principals do not consider the forthcoming expenses, caused by the new investments, like heating, lighting etc. There were 17% of principals having no clear opinion about this question. The reason may be so that they have not dealt with investment planning and therefore they did not have an opinion. Also on average, about one fourth (26%) of council members did not have an opinion about these questions. Therefore, it can be said, they are not sure, what the school's development plan exactly consists of.

According to all school performance management regulations, mentioned above, the every development plan should serve as a basis for annual budget e.g. the expenditures budget. Our analysis revealed that 71% of principals admit that the school budget is composed in accordance with the development plan; 7% answer to this question negatively and 22% have no clear opinion or knowledge about this question. An another aspect of the linkage between the development plan and real expenditures, which was analysed among the schools' principals, teachers and members of the council was following: are there enough resources available to reach the goals presented in the development plan. Only 28% of principals answered positively to this question. But more problematic is the fact, that 36% of principals, having no clear opinion about this question; also 36% of principals admit that there is not enough resources. This might be a sign that in reality, there is a critical number of principals, who are not aware about budgeting and development planning and the real actions in schools are often rather not based on development plans.

Consequently, there are many schools, having no clear vision on the execution of the development plan and the latter is often rather formal, elaborated just because it was required to implement by the law. This aspect was even more problematic among the council members and teachers: the share of positive answers was 19% in both groups; 45% of teachers and 43% of council members have no clear opinion. 36% of teachers and 38% of school council members admit that there is not enough resources to fulfil the development plan. The latter is in consistence with principals' answers to this question. Proceeding from this, it raises a question– why there have been made development plans, which have no coverage in terms of resources available for the school?

Teachers' participation in decision making and development planning is emphasised as a mean of gaining teachers' better motivation and learning from each other. (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004) 81% of principals and almost the same share – 78% of teacher believe, that the staff members in their school acknowledge their role in terms of the development plan. At the same time almost one fifth of teachers and principals have no clear viewpoint about this aspect, which can be caused by the fact that they are not able to translate the goals indicated in the development plan, into the everyday actions. This confirms that the development plans are rather formal and the development plans are elaborated just because it is required by regulatory act and these are rather seldom used for school development and performance improvement. Among school council members, the answers are even more variable – 71% agree and 5% admit that the responsibilities in fulfilling the development plan are not clear

among the school staff members. These aspects need to be included into the self (internal)-evaluation process to monitor and elaborate the actions to improve the performance management and strategic management.

Political implications

The compilation of school development plans should be an internal desire, not only a formal obligation required by certain law regulation. Otherwise, PDCA cycle and MBO approach will never be met in school management practice. In Estonian general schools, there seems to be missing a knowledge about the obligation to elaborate the development plans for the schools. The analysis and discussion of the school development plans is needed to organize on regional level, involving into this process also the representatives of Ministry of Education and Research, local governments and entrepreneurs. This comprehensive involvement can substantially contribute the content of development plans within the PDCA framework and to link the development plans to the regional development plans to improve systematically the regional development.

In addition, under the coordination of the Ministry of Education, the performance measurement system, based on school strategic regulations, also methodical guidelines on internal and external evaluation should be worked out. Proceeding from the corresponding performance measurement system, also the practical assessment principles of the schools performance and how to deliver the results of the assessment to the schools, local governments and departments of the ministry need to be defined.

5.2. Cooperation with stakeholder groups

As it was discussed above, the distributed leadership and synergy from stakeholders' teamwork in favour of schools performance are very important factors in achieving schools' better results in teaching and pupil learning activities. The collaboration with internal stakeholders, like teachers, pupils and other staff members, as well as external ones– parents, local government, school council members – is important in highly decentralised education system, like it is in Estonia.

Our analysis concentrated on the pupils and their parents involvement in schools decision-making. 88% of principals reported that pupils' opinion is taken into account and even more (92%) stated the same about parents involvement. Still, the share is quite high and promising in both cases. But the pupils' and parents' opinions on their involvement was not so positive – only 46% of pupils and 54% of parents agree the abovementioned statement. Still there are also principals and teachers, believing that the collaboration with parents would be helpful in achieving pupils' better performance.

For teacher salaries and some other schools' expenses, there are grants allocated from the central government budget, but the intended purpose is not determined. It means that the local governments can distribute the funds to schools, like it seems best for them and they even can use this financial resource also for other purposes, not

spending on schools. Therefore, the collaboration with local governments is very important for schools, in order to assure that the needed amount of funds to all the schools is in local government. But actually only 59% of principals reported a good collaboration with local governments on school financing and 56% of principals affirm, that they were aware about the amounts of financial resources distributed for every particular school from central governments' budget. On the other hand, 81% of principals report that they have enough information about schools finances, 15% do not have a clear opinion and only 4% have answered negatively. Therefore we can conclude, that principals' knowledge about managing finances is very limited – almost half of principals do not have knowledge on principles of financing of the schools in Estonia and where the money to their budget comes from. At the same time they do not seem to be motivated to know more about the schools' finances.

It could be seen, that there is about half of school principals, who did not acknowledge to be in their responsibilities to negotiate with local governments in terms of their schools budget. It seems that there is a number of principals, who do not have a clear vision about the amount of the school's budget at all: 18% of principals did not have a clear vision, whether they have problems at the end of year, because of lack of financial resources left. 16% of principals admitted that there have been similar problems in their schools and 66% reported, that they have not met such problems. Similar problems were reported also by the teachers and the council members. Therefore we can conclude, that the knowledge about the school budget and its management is rather moderate among the teachers and council members: accordingly 51% and 41% of them report that they have not clear standpoint about this issue.

Additionally, our analysis revealed that almost half of teachers and parents, and 20-30% of council members do not know much about financial management of the schools. Unfortunately, also an essential number of principals do not have enough knowledge or understanding about, what is their responsibility in school financial management. But as it seems to be not a problem for the principals, there is also lacking a motivation to improve it.

Political implications

In the circumstances of declining number of pupils, the school financing from central government sources will be reduced. This will put an increasing pressure on local government sources. This leads to the changes in the structures of schools financing sources. Within this framework it is highly needed to improve the school cooperation with different stakeholder groups. Also the framework to involve different stakeholders groups in the decentralized schools management system should be built up centrally and consultations of schools should be organised. This has to be as a basement to introduce topical teamwork between different stakeholders and school management. There is a need to provide support and also pressure on central and regional level to ensure individual and group cognitive capacities needed in order to gain benefits from collective learning opportunities and site-based management. Also the real long-term goals of policies elaborated centrally and the stakeholders'

responsibility and also gains should be clarified, to avoid sense-making and opportunistic action.

6. Concluding remarks

This paper responds to a call for the study of the performance management development in public schools. The present research investigated, using the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check and Act) cycle model and statistical analysis, how Estonian general schools use the elements of performance management and how the certain implementation issues of school development plans and comprehensive stakeholders involvement has been carried out. The empirical findings using this theoretical framework lead us to a number of observations.

First, the paper contributes to the scarce knowledge about implementation of performance management issues in public schools. The compilation of school development plans seems to be mainly a formal obligation required by certain legal regulations and not as an internal desire. Proceeding from our analysis we propose as a political implications that the analysis and discussion of the school development plans is needed to organize on regional level, involving into this process also the representatives of Ministry of Education, local governments, and entrepreneurs.

This comprehensive involvement can substantially contribute the content of development plans within the PDCA framework and to link the development plans to the regional development plans to improve systematically the regional development.

Secondly, the Estonian educational system is strongly based on the approaches that have proven to be performance-enhancing. Our analysis revealed that it is needed to compile a balanced system of performance measures for the schools involving as non-financial as well as financial measures. Therefore, the balanced school performance measurement system, based on school strategic regulations, and also on internal and external evaluation methodical framework, should be worked out under the coordination of the Ministry of Education. Proceeding from the corresponding performance measurement system, also the practical assessment principles of the schools performance and how to deliver the results of the assessment to the schools, local governments and departments of the Ministry needed to be defined.

Thirdly, due to demographic reasons, the number of pupils in public general schools will decline during next years. Correspondingly, the school financing from central government sources, influenced by pupil number will be reduced. This will put an increasing pressure on local government sources and leads to the changes in the structures of schools financing sources. Therefore we propose that it is highly necessary to improve the school cooperation with different stakeholder groups. Also the framework to involve different stakeholders groups in the decentralized schools management system should be built up. This has to be as a basement to introduce topical teamwork between different stakeholders and school management.

Finally, we would like to admit that this exploratory study has certain limitations. First, it has a static character. It would be useful to expand the survey on more longitudinal aspects of performance management in the schools. Secondly, there is a need to further explore in wider variety of individual, operational and strategic performance management indicators and their interconnections in the implementation of performance management in public schools.

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HUVIGRUPPIDE KAASAMINE TULEMUSLIKKUSE JUHTIMISSE EESTI ÜLDHARIDUSKOOIDES

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Tartu Ülikool

Käesolev artikkel uurib erinevate huvigruppide (*stakeholders*) kaasatust tulemuslikkuse juhtimisse Eesti üldhariduskoolides. Meie poolt läbi viidud uuring põhines 303 üldhariduskooli andmetel.

Alates 1980ndate algusest on demokraatlike Lääne riikide avalikus sektoris otsitud võimalusi efektiivsuse (*efficiency*) ehk tõhususe ja mõjususe (*effectiveness*) parandamiseks, et säilitada usaldust avaliku sektori organisatsioonide suhtes. Avaliku sektori institutsioonide tulemuslikkus on mitmemõõtmeline ja interdistsiplinaarne uurimisvaldkond, mis põhineb mitmel erinevatel teoreetilistel kontseptsioonidel ja lähenemistel.

Mussari (2001) on rõhutanud, et juhtimise detsentraliseerimine avalikus sektoris ning „tulemuskultuuri” või „tulemustele orienteerituse” arendamine on kaasa toonud laiemat tulemuslikkuse juhtimise (*performance management*) instrumentide kasutamist.

Kooli tulemuslikkus (*school performance*), selle hindamine (mõõtmine) ja juhtimine on paljude autorite (Bosker, Scheerens 2000; Ascher, Fruchter 2001; Karatzias, Power, Swanson 2001; Woods, Levačić 2002; Dolton, Newson 2003; Anderson, MacDonald, Sinnemann 2003; Irs, Ploom 2009; Irs, Türk, Vadi 2009; jt) ning hariduspoliitikute jaoks väga oluline teema. Levacic (2008) märgib et kooli efektiivsuse hindamine on keeruline valdkond. Ta väidab, et lihtsate efektiivsus- või tulemusnäitajate nagu kulud ühe õpilase kohta analüüsimine võib anda väga eksitava pildi. Webb ja Vulliamy (1998) arvates on regulaarne tulemuslikkuse jälgimine ja hindamine üha olulisemad detsentraliseeritud kui tsentraliseeritud juhtimise puhul. Ka Eesti haridussüsteemi võib iseloomustada detsentraliseeritud süsteemina. Koolide tulemuslikkuse juhtimine võimaldab koolijuhtidel ja õpetajatel selgemini mõista, millised on prioriteedid ja olulisemad eesmärgid kooli arendamisel, millest saavad kasu nii õpilased, õpetajad ja kool tervikuna. Seega võib kooli tulemuslikkuse hindamist ja juhtimist käsitleda kui üht olulisimat tegurit haridussüsteemi kvaliteedi ja efektiivsuse tõstmisel.

Käesoleva artikli teoreetiliseks aluseks on tulemusjuhtimises ja kvaliteedijuhtimises laialdast rakendust leidnud Demingi pideva parendamise mudel, mis on tuntud ka PDCA (*plan, do, check, act*) tsükliks (Deming 2000). Seda võib käsitleda kui üldist arenguprotsessi juhtimise meetodit, mida saab rakendada väga erinevates valdkondades.

Demingi mudel käsitleb tulemuste parendamist pideva, suletud tsükliks. Demingi tulemuslikkuse juhtimise (TJ) tsükkel koosneb neljast osast (*ibid.*):

- strateegiline ja iga-aastane planeerimine (planeeri);

- tulemus-eelarvestamine (teosta);
- tulemuslikkuse mõõtmine ja aruandlus (kontrolli);
- tulemustest lähtuv otsustamine (mõjuta).

Ka OECD (2005) määratleb tulemuslikkuse juhtimist kui juhtimise tsüklit, kajastades sellega PDCA tsükli mõtet – eesmärgid ja ülesanded on kindlaks määratud, juhid on paindlikud nende saavutamisel, tegelik tulemuslikkus on hinnatud ja aruannetes kajastatud, ning see info suundub otsustesse programmi rahastamise, kujunduse ja toimimise kohta. Koolides võib vaadelda PDCA tsüklit süsteemina, mis hõlmab strateegilist planeerimist kooli arengukavade kaudu, tulemuse eelarvestamist kooli tegevuskavade ja vastavate kooli eelarvete kaudu, tulemuslikkuse hindamist välis- ja sisehindamise kaudu ja tulemuspõhist otsustamist nii koolide, KOVide kui ka ministeeriumi tasandil. Otsustusprotsess eeldab aga ka koostööd ja koordineerimist nimetatud otsustustasandite vahel.

Freyer *et al.* (2009, p. 480) toovad edukate TJ süsteemi tunnuste hulgas välja ka järgmised:

1) TJ süsteemide ühildamine organisatsiooni strateegiate ja teiste toimivate süsteemidega; 2) eestvedamise (*leadership*) kohustuse täitmine; 3) huvigruppide kaasatus ja 4) pidev tulemuste seire, tagasiside, levitamine ja õppimine. Neist esimest ja viimast tunnust võib seostada PDCA tsükli juhtimisega ja ülejäänuid huvigruppide koostööga.

Eesmärgiga motiveerida kohalikke hariduse pakkujaid tegutsema õpilaste ja lastevanemate huvides, on suurendatud koolide konkurentsi õpilase pearaha-põhise rahastamise kaudu. Seepärast, et olla jätkusuutlik, peaks iga kool töötama kvaliteedi juhtimise süsteemi kaasabil. Wössmanni jt (2007) poolt PISA 2003 tulemuste põhjal tehtud empiiriline analüüs näitas, et tulemusvastutuse ja autonoomia erinevad tahud on tihedalt seotud õpilase edasijõudmisega koolis.

Avaliku sektori organisatsiooni võib käsitleda kui erinevate huvigruppide koostöövormi. Kooli peamisteks huvigruppideks on ministeerium (haridussüsteemi suunaja ja korraldaja), kohalik omavalitsus (kooli pidaja), töötajad, õpetajad, õpilased, lapsevanemad ja ühiskond. Kooli juhtkond peaks püüdlema juhtida kooli võimalikult efektiivselt nende huvigruppide ootuste täitmise poole. Selle tagamiseks vajab juhtkond mitmekülgset informatsiooni, mis toetaks nii eesmärkide püstitamist kui ka abistaks eesmärgi saavutamise juhtimisel. Iga eesmärk on vajalik määratleda mõõdetavate näitajate abil. See eeldab seoste loomist eesmärgi, kriitilise edutegurite (võimaldajate) ja tulemust kajastavate näitajate vahel. Organisatsiooni tulemuslikkuse hindamise ja juhtimise süsteemi võime vaadata kui organisatsioonilist vahendit selleks, et jälgida, hinnata ja juhtida tulemusi kooskõlas püstitatud visioonide ja eesmärkidega. Nii nagu seda vaatles ka PDCA tsüklil.

Majandusliku Koostöö ja Arengu Organisatsioon (OECD) poolt 29 OECD liikmes- ja kandidaatriikides (sh Eesti) läbi viidud uuring (2008) näitas, et Eesti üldhariduskoolides on suhteliselt suured otsustusvolitused kooli õppekava,

inimressursside juhtimise, arengukavade ja eelarvestamise osas. Lähtudes PDCA tsükli põhimõtetest on koolide tulemuslikkuse juhtimise olulisteks elementideks koolide sise- ja välishindamine. Eelnimetatud OECD uuring (2008) näitas, et koolide sise- ja välishindamise süsteemi on rakendatud vähem kui pooltes uuritud riikides (14 riigis 29st). Seega ei ole koolide tegevuse välis- ja sisehindamine hariduspoliitikas veel väga laialt levinud ning seda valdkonda on ka suhteliselt vähe uuritud. Eestis on nii välis- kui ka sisehindamine õigusregulatsiooni kaudu muudetud kohustuslikuks. Seega võib märkida, et Eesti oma detsentraliseeritud haridussüsteemiga on huvitavaks näiteks uurimaks NPM põhimõtete rakendamist koolides. Siiski kajastavad nimetatud rahvusvahelised uurimused vaid seadusandliku raamistiku võrdlust. Mis koolides tegelikult toimub, seda on märksa keerulisem uurida. Leithwood jt (2004) rõhutavad, et vähe on uuritud, kuidas poliitikaid ja õigusakte on rakendatud kooli tasandil ning kuidas seda arendada, et need enam aitaksid kaasa koolide ja õpilaste tulemuslikkuse parandamisel.

Meie poolt läbi viidud uuring viidi läbi 2009–2010. aastal ja selle käigus andsid oma arvamuse 303 koolijuhti, 2,165 õpetajat, 5,482 õpilast, 1,922 lapsevanemat ja 546 kooli hoolekogude liiget (peamiselt kohalike omavalitsuste esindajad).

Meie uuring keskendus, ühelt poolt, koolide tulemuslikkuse juhtimise aspektide analüüsile toetudes strateegilise juhtimise ja finantsjuhtimise komponentide analüüsile kasutades selleks eelnimetatud PDCA tsükli raamistikku ja teisalt, huvigruppide kaasatuse analüüsile koolide tulemuslikkuse juhtimise arendamisel.

Analüüs näitas, et kooli arengukava on paljudes koolides formaalne dokument ning on ressursside juhtimise ja eelarvestamisega nõrgalt seotud. Samas valdav osa koolijuhtidest ja hoolekogu liikmetest kinnitas, et suuremate kulutuste planeerimisel, eelarve koostamisel ja ressursside kasutamisel koolis lähtutakse arengukavast. Samas ei osanud märkimisväärne osa vastajatest (sh õpetajatest) siiski kooli igapäevaelu ja ressursside kasutamise seotud küsimusi seostada kooli arengukavaga. Selgus, et ligi veerand küsitlusest ei ole kursis kooli ressursside juhtimist ja arengukava ning nende vahelisi seoseid puudutavate küsimustega koolis. Paraku oli ka koolijuhtide seas selliste vastuste osakaal võrdlemisi kõrge - 10%.

Analüüs näitas, et oluline osa õpetajatest ja hoolekogu liikmetest ei ole kooli arengu planeerimise ja eelarvestamisega seotud küsimustega oma tegevuses kokku puutunud. Nii ei osanud ligi viiendik õpetajatest ja hoolekogu liikmetest määratleda, kas kooli kulutuste planeerimisel lähtutakse arengukavast või mitte.

Analüüsist selgus, et vähem kui kolmandikus koolides suudavad nende reaalsed materiaalsed võimalused tagada arengukavas kirjeldatud eesmärkide saavutamise. Samas 44% vastajatest, sh 36% koolijuhtidest ei osanud anda hinnangut eelarvevahendite piisavuse kohta kooli arengukavas seatud eesmärkide täitmiseks. Kuid koolijuhid olid ka arengukava kooskõla osas reaalsete võimalustega ülejäänud vastanutega (õpetajad, hoolekogu) võrreldes mõnevõrra optimistlikumad.

Seega oluline osa õpetajatest ja hoolekogu liikmetest ning ka koolijuhtidest ei oma kooli eelarvestamise ja arengukava seoste kohta selget seisukohta, vaatamata sellele, et nii kooli arengukava kui eelarve koostamisel peab Põhikooli- ja Gümnaasiumi Seaduse (PGS) kohaselt olema kaasatud kooli hoolekogu, õppenõukogu ning õpilasesindus. Vastavalt PGSile kinnitatakse arengukava kooli pidaja kehtestatud korras. Arengukava ja selle muudatused esitatakse enne kinnitamist arvamuse andmiseks kooli hoolekogule, õpilasesindusele ja õppenõukogule.

Meie analüüs näitas ka et huvigrupid on kooli ressursside juhtimisse vähe kaasatud, kuid koolijuhid ei näe sellest probleemi. Selle tulemusena puudub koolides tihti teadmine ressursside juhtimise võimalustest ja sellega kaasnevalt puudub ka motivatsioon selle optimeerimiseks.

Valdav enamus koolijuhtidest kinnitavad, et kooli eelarve koostamisel tehakse koostööd kohalike omavalitsustega (KOV). Siiski ligi kümnendik neist ei oska hinnata, kas tehakse koostööd või mitte. Ka hoolekogu osalemise osas kooli eelarve koostamisel andsid koolijuhid ja hoolekogu liikmed erinevaid hinnanguid. Ligemale poolte (41%) vastanud hoolekogu liikmete arvates ei ole neid eelarve koostamisse kaasatud. Koolijuhtidest on samal arvamusel oluliselt väiksem osa – vaid veerand.

Poliitikasoovitused

Meie poolt läbi viidud analüüsid võimaldasid välja töötada mitmed poliitika-soovitused, milliseid oleks autorite arvates mõttekas rakendada koolide tulemuslikkuse juhtimise süsteemide arendamisel ja huvigruppide laiemal kaasamisel sellesse tegevusse.

Esiteks, analüüs näitas, et haridussüsteemi erinevatel juhtimistasanditel kasutatakse erinevaid koolide tulemuslikkuse näitajaid, mis vajavad tasakaalustamist eelkõige finantstulemuslikkuse näitajate kaasamisega. Seetõttu on vaja HTM suunamisel välja kujundada kooli tulemuslikkuse hindamise ja seda iseloomustavate näitajate süsteem hariduse strateegiliste dokumentide ning koolide välis- ja sisehindamise meetodikate abil.

Teiseks on vajalik välja töötada koolide tulemuslikkuse hindamise rakendus-põhimõtted, kus määratletakse tulemusnäitajate monitoorimise ja analüüsi tulemuste ning sellest koolide, KOVide ja HTM asjaomaste osakondade teavitamise kord.

Kolmandaks, koolide arengukavade koostamine peaks olema sisemine soov, mitte kohustus seadusandja ees. Koolide arengukavade analüüs ja kaitsmine võiks toimuda regionaalselt, kaasates sellesse HTM, KOV, maakondade ja ka ettevõtjate esindajad. See võimaldaks muuta arengukavad sisukamaks, kogu piirkonda hõlmavaks ja selle tulemusena ka kogu piirkonna arengu süsteemsemaks.

Neljandaks, õpilaste arvu vähenemise tingimustes vähenevad koolide õppetegevuse finantseerimise vahendid, mis toob kaasa surve KOVide rahaliste vahendite kasutamiseks. Sellega kaasneb kooli kulude struktuuri muutus. Nendes tingimustes

on vajalik riiklikult arendada koostööd KOVidega nii koolivõrgu optimeerimisel kui ka klasside minimaalsuuruste ja arvude määratlemisel. Rangemad nõuded tuleks kehtestada õppetulemuslikkuse tagamisele ning vastutus selle eest peaks olema nii KOVil kui koolil.

Vaja on tagada riigipoolne kvaliteetne koolivõrgu seire, et varakult avastada tulemustelt ja jätkusuutlikkuselt nõrgemaid koole ning jõuliselt rakendada vajalikke meetmeid olukorra parandamiseks.